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**OPENING STATEMENT OF DUNCAN HUNTER
CHAIRMAN, MILITARY PROCUREMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
HEARING ON CHEMICAL DEMILITARIZATION PROGRAM**

Today, the military procurement subcommittee meets to review the Department of Defense's program for destruction of the U.S. stockpile of lethal chemical warfare agents and munitions. We are joined in the hearing by several members of Congress who have chemical stockpile storage sites in their districts and who are interested in the chemical demilitarization program. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome.

The U.S. chemical weapons stockpile originally consisted of approximately 31,000 tons of lethal chemical agents in a wide variety of munitions, located at Johnston Atoll in the Pacific southwest of Hawaii and eight sites in the continental United States.

The Fiscal Year 1986 Defense Authorization Act requires that the destruction of the stockpile be carried out so as to insure maximum protection of the environment, the general public, and the workers at the storage and demilitarization sites. Destruction of the stockpile is supposed to be completed by April 29, 2007 in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention Treaty.

As of September 10, 2000, approximately 6,670 tons or 21 percent of the stockpile has been destroyed at the two active demilitarization facilities: Johnston Atoll and Tooele, Utah. Three additional facilities that will use the baseline incineration process are under construction at Anniston, Alabama, Umatilla, Oregon, and Pine Bluff Arsenal, Arkansas, as are two pilot plant facilities to prove out the neutralization processes that will be used for disposal of bulk agent at Edgewood, Maryland, and Newport, Indiana, and selection of either the baseline process or alternative technologies for use at Pueblo, Colorado, and Blue Grass Army Depot, Kentucky is pending.

The total cost of the program has grown from an estimated \$1.7 billion in 1986 to approximately \$15.3 billion today, and by the end of fiscal year 2000 approximately \$7.5 billion will have been provided for the program.

As will be discussed by our witnesses today, during the night of May 8, earlier this year, following the completion of M56 GB-filled rocket warhead demilitarization and plant maintenance operations at the Tooele (Utah) Chemical Demilitarization Facility, alarms inside the facility indicated the presence of GB agent in the facility's common exhaust stack. The discharge of a small quantity of agent from the stack was confirmed and perimeter monitors indicated that no detectable level of agent reached the boundary of the Deseret Chemical Depot. The Army's press release the next day indicated that local authorities had been notified and that there were no injuries to the Tooele facility workforce and no danger to the public. The press release also indicated that chemical demilitarization operations at Tooele had been suspended pending

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an investigation of the incident by the Department of the Army and an independent evaluation by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and that the Utah Department of Environmental Quality was on site to monitor the situation. What was not noted in the press release was the fact that the local emergency response agency was not notified about the incident until approximately 4 hours after the first alarm indicated the potential presence of chemical agent in the exhaust stack.

The chemical release incident at Tooele on the night of May 8 has created a great deal of concern on the part of those involved in the chemical weapons demilitarization program in both the government and the private sector alike. The issues that result have been the focus of a number of articles in the local media and concerns expressed by officials and residents of the local communities, particularly in Utah, in Alabama, and in Oregon, and much discussion among program officials, local officials, Members of Congress, and technical experts: What was the cause of the incident at Tooele? What must be done to prevent such an incident from recurring? What are the implications of the incident to demilitarization facilities under construction at Anniston (the next facility scheduled to become operational) and other sites? What must be done to insure that the chemical stockpile is destroyed so as to insure the maximum safety of the workers, the environment, and the local citizens who live near the stockpile storage sites.

The purpose of our hearing today is to come to grips with these issues. The hearing will involve three panels: the first to address what happened and the results and recommendations of the investigations that followed; the second to address the concerns of the local communities and what must be done to insure that the safety of the workers, the environment, and the members of the local community is assured; and the third panel to address the government's implementation of the recommendations from the investigations and response to the concerns raised by the representatives from the local communities.

I now want to turn to the distinguished ranking member of the Military Procurement Subcommittee, Mr. Norman Sisisky of Virginia, for any opening statement he may wish to make.

For the first panel we are pleased to have as our witnesses Mr. Mike Rowe, Dr. Kevin Yesky, Colonel Kevin Connors, Dr. Dennis Downs, who will present the results of the investigations conducted by their activities; Dr. David Kosson from the National Academy of Sciences' Stockpile Committee who will discuss the oversight role performed by the committee; and Ms. Cheryl Maggio, Dr. John Ferriter, and Mr. Tim Garrett, who are available to answer questions relative to their areas of responsibility.

The second panel will address the concerns of the local communities in which the chemical demilitarization facilities are located, with particular emphasis on Tooele (where the release incident took place) and Anniston (the next site scheduled to become operational). I would like to call on Mr. Hansen of Utah and Mr. Riley Alabama to introduce the witnesses from their districts.

For the third panel, we are pleased to have as our witnesses Dr. Anna Johnson-Winegar, Deputy Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Chemical/Biological Matters; Dr. Gloria Patton, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Chemical Demilitarization; Mr. Denzel Fisher, representing the Deputy Secretary of the Army for Environment, Safety and Occupational Health; Mr. Jim Bacon, Project Manager for Chemical Demilitarization; Mr. Russ Salter, Federal Emergency Management Agency; and from the Soldier, Biological & Chemical Command, we welcome back Dr. John Ferriter.

Ladies and gentlemen, we look forward to your testimony on what is being done by the Department of Defense, the Army, and FEMA to address the recommendations from the investigations and to prevent such an incident from occurring again either at Tooele, or any of the other baseline incineration sites. And we look forward to your response to the issues raised in testimony by the National Research Counsel Stockpile Committee and by the representatives of the local communities. Time permitting, I hope we will also have time to discuss the status of the overall chemical agents and munitions destruction program and any issues you anticipate in execution of the fiscal year 2001 program and anticipated issues that might be raised in the fiscal year 2002 budget request.

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